

Faith and Inspiration

In A Mirror, Dimly

Seemingly persistent reports of human misdeeds and atrocities might lead us to wonder at the depths of depravity, cruelty, and malice that we as a species are capable of. The Bible indicates that while human beings clearly possess the capacity for both the most noble and the most heinous actions possible, in their "natural" or unredeemed state, they are more inclined toward ungodly thought and behavior (Genesis 6:5, Jeremiah 17:9, Psalm 51:5, Psalm 53:1-3, Matthew 15:19, 1 Corinthians 2:14).

Whereas upon entering into the arrangement of atonement via grace, we are renewed (2 Corinthians 5:17) and seek guidance by the Holy Spirit in our attitude and conduct, all the while still contending with temptations and struggles of our "old" yet evidently concurrent sinful nature (Romans 6:6; Romans 7:20, 25; Colossians 3:5; Colossians 3:10).

This is not quite the same concept as dualism, the notion of "equal" and rival forces of good and evil present in the cosmos that clash but somehow "balance" each other out. According to Scripture, the ideal state of the universe is perfect harmony between God and his creation, without conflict or competition.

It may seem normal for people, including believers, to question the nature of and reason behind what we deem "evil." The fact is that while we can possess some cognizance of the truths of reality that address such questions, in our iniquitous state we typically only perceive an imperfect view of the full account.

One of my favorite Bible verses is 1 Corinthians 13:12 — in particular, the King James Version, which includes the phrase "For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face ..."; I have always found the Early Modern English rendering of this passage to possess a certain aesthetically appealing literary quality, even so far as engaging my imagination.

However, it may not be entirely lexically accurate in the sense that the original Greek text refers to observing a mirror reflecting an image rather than peering through heavily tinted glass as the KJV might seem to imply.

Conceivably, either of these interpretations might appear to convey the same intention in meaning. Some will claim that the term "looking glass" is a common description of a mirror, and so is not outside the realm of acceptable linguistic application.

On the other hand, it might prove insightful to understand that ancient mirrors were primarily

articles consisting of polished metal surfaces (very crude, small glass mirror did exist but were not as easy to manufacture at the time). While high quality variants were certainly capable of generating decently detailed

reflections, a typical metal mirror with a minimal degree of polishing produced a somewhat "cloudy" or obscured image.

This may be more in keeping with what the apostle Paul was alluding to. The metaphorical use of mirrors is not uncommon in his writing, and in this context, he was attempting to illustrate



Vincent V. Marshburn  
Homestead Mennonite Church



our sometimes nebulous, indistinct, or enigmatic impression and awareness of the underlying spiritual substance of existence.

In fact, the Greek term that is translated as "darkly" in KJV is that from which we derive our word "enigma."

Throughout history, mirrors and reflections have signified various representations of the soul or spirit. This may play some role in the origins of the superstition of "bad luck" resulting from broken mirrors. Various works of fiction, both classic and modern, utilize mirrors as a method of interacting with spirits or countering evil.

Mirrors or the concept of mirrors are also sometimes used to depict what some deem "opposite" or contrasting qualities of humanity — after all, mirrors by design display reverse images.

A well-known episode of the original "Star Trek" television series titled "Mirror, Mirror" portrays members of the crew of the U.S.S. Enterprise interacting with a parallel universe in which alternative and contrary versions of themselves exist. Conflict ensues when certain individuals from both universes are inadvertently transposed with each other. The Captain Kirk, Doctor McCoy, Scotty, and Uhura with whom we are familiar end up in what later came to be known in Trek lore as the "mirror universe," while their more barbaric counterparts attempt to adapt to the "prime" universe.

As one might predict, their experience is quite challenging and troubling, especially considering that in this parallel universe, in place of the principally peaceful and humane United Federation of Planets, there exists a Terran

Empire whose overriding motivation is galactic conquest and subjugation.

Near the conclusion of the episode, the "good" Captain Kirk attempts to persuade the "mirror" version of Spock to consider a morally, and perhaps tactically, better approach.

KIRK: You're a man of integrity in both universes, Mister Spock. MIRROR SPOCK: You must return to your universe. I must have my captain back. I shall operate the transporter. You have two minutes and ten seconds.

KIRK: In that time I have something to say. How long before the Halkan prediction of galactic revolt is realised?

MIRROR SPOCK: Approximately two hundred and forty years.

KIRK: The inevitable outcome? MIRROR SPOCK: The Empire shall be overthrown, of course.

KIRK: The illogic of waste, Mister Spock. The waste of lives, potential, resources, time. I submit to you that your Empire is illogical because it cannot endure. I submit that you are illogical to be a willing part of it.

MIRROR SPOCK: You have one minute and twenty-three seconds.

KIRK: If change is inevitable, predictable, beneficial, doesn't logic demand that you be a part of it?

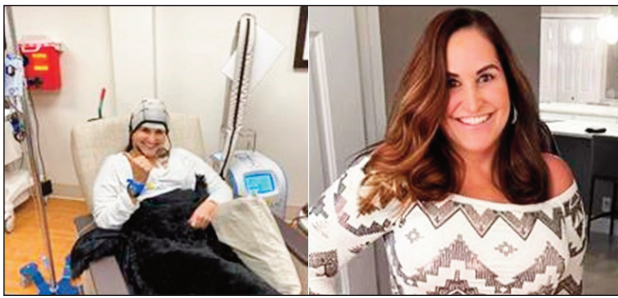
MIRROR SPOCK: One man cannot summon the future.

KIRK: But one man can change the present. Be the captain of this Enterprise, Mister Spock. Find a logical reason for sparing the Halkans and make it stick. Push till it gives.

The basis of many such analogous yet antithetical manifestations is that a "mirror" version of something is essentially its opposite — thus, mirror versions of "good" people are their "evil" counterparts. Again, this seems to allude to a kind of dualistic interpretation of reality which, while not necessarily the most authentic, can often be useful and even appealing for delivering such narratives.

The Bible assures us that there are no specifically good or evil versions of people. We have all gone astray; we all fall short of God's desires and aspirations for us (Ecclesiastes 7:20, Isaiah 53:6, Romans 3:10-18, 1 John 1:8). The Bible also affirms that we are made in God's image and are intended to reflect God's love, grace, and compassion (Genesis 1:26, Proverbs 27:19, Romans 8:29, 2 Corinthians 3:18). So, while it may be true that everyone has a "dark side," it is also true that we possess the capability and opportunity, especially when embodying the reality of redemption, to manifest a "light side." What sort of mirror do we intend to epitomize — one that echoes and expresses the inner opacity of our transgressive nature, or one that exhibits and exemplifies the illumination of God's majesty and generosity?

How a Miami Dade Teacher Beat Cancer Twice



In Miami-Dade County, Donna Wolfson is known as Ms. Wolfson, a beloved 10th-grade math teacher. With a focus on kindness, respect for others, and creative problem-solving, Ms. Wolfson's passion for teaching inspired her students to fall in love with learning.

While her students saw her as dedicated and smart, her close family and friends admired her strength and determination.

In 2009, Donna joined the most powerful and elite group of women when she added a new badge of honor, breast cancer survivor. However, little did Donna know that her strength would be tested again.

Just ten years later, in 2019, following a routine mammogram with her doctor, Donna once again had to put on her armor when she found out her breast cancer was back. A pathology test revealed that she will need to undergo twelve rounds of chemotherapy.

When she learned that her cancer was back, Donna was determined to not only beat cancer, for the second time but to remain in control of her body as best as she could. She knew she didn't want to leave her students or her friends and family.

Following the shock of the diagnosis, Donna knew that she would lose all of her hair within the first two weeks of chemotherapy. The thought of looking in the mirror and seeing a sick person staring back at her, again, was devastating.

But to Donna's luck, her friend pointed her to the FDA-cleared Paxman Scalp Cooling System, a remedy to combat chemo-induced alopecia by reducing the temperature of a patient's scalp to inhibit blood flow to hair follicles. Donna ran to her doctor with the news and became the first patient to use the Paxman Scalp Cooling System wearing her custom-fit cap at every treatment.

"Even though my students knew I was battling breast cancer, I didn't want to look sick inside my classroom," said Donna. "The Paxman Scalp Cooling treatment gave me the power to maintain some sense of control and maintain my privacy. I was able to share my news with whom I wanted to, instead of allowing my cancer to tell my story."

Donna had her treatments every other Friday and returned to the classroom on Wednesday where she felt safe and had a sense of purpose. Her family's unconditional love, laughter from her friends, and encouragement from her students propelled Donna to continue fighting.

Thanks to the Paxman Scalp Cooling System, Donna was not only able to retain 50% of her hair. The hair that she did lose was filled in within three months after her last chemo treatment. Today, Donna is in remission and continues to teach mathematics.

To submit an obituary or death notice, email wording and jpg photo to info@newsleadermail.com, 305-245-2311 Print deadline is Wednesday at noon.

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Healthy Resolutions for the New Year: Put Prevention at the Top of Your List



By Dr. Mark Rubin, Medical Director of Health Services in South Florida, Humana

Whether it's to exercise more, eat better, or learn a skill, many of us have made resolutions for 2023. As a physician, I'd offer an additional resolution that may not sound exciting but could be the key to a longer, healthier life.

My advice: Focus on prevention. This is especially important for seniors, as the risk for health problems increases as we age. Identifying problems early or preventing them completely improves the likelihood of positive outcomes.

For Floridians who are enrolled in Original Medicare or a Medicare Advantage plan (which includes the same

coverage as Original Medicare plus additional benefits), understanding your benefits can make it easier to stick with this resolution, often at no additional cost. Here are my recommendations to get you started.

1) Schedule an annual wellness visit with your provider.

Don't wait until you are sick or in pain to see your healthcare provider. An annual wellness check, covered by Medicare Part B, is the first step. In-home health and well-being assessments may be a convenient option for those with Medicare Advantage plans. During the visit, your provider will assess your health risks; discuss screenings, vaccinations and other recommended preventive services based on age, gender and medical and family history; and perform a cognitive assessment to look for signs of impairment. Then your provider can develop a personalized plan to help prevent disease or disability.

2)Take advantage of covered preventive services and vaccinations.

Preventive screenings are crucial to early diagnosis and treatment and ultimately may result in improved long-term health outcomes. Medicare Part B coverage includes screenings for many common health problems, like cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes, depression and glaucoma. It also covers counseling for behavioral health issues like obesity, tobacco use and alcohol misuse.

With the tripledemic of COVID-19, flu and RSV spreading throughout Miami, it's important for older adults to stay current with vaccinations. Medicare covers the cost of vaccines for COVID-19, flu, pneumonia and hepatitis B.

3)Maximize your supplemental benefits.

Individuals with a Medicare Advantage plan have coverage beyond Medicare Part B that may cover additional health-related benefits, so take advantage of your included

preventive care services.

Most Medicare Advantage plans offer dental, vision and hearing coverage. Tooth and gum problems can increase your risk of diabetes, heart disease and stroke. Your plan may cover dental care and procedures to maintain your oral health and even provide allowances to pay for out-of-pocket expenses. Your plan may also include coverage for eye exams and glasses as well as hearing exams and aids.

For those with a plan that includes prescription drugs, the shingles vaccine is covered, and Part D insulins will cost no more than \$35 per month.

Other supplemental benefits may include transportation to medical appointments, fitness programs and allowances to help pay for healthy foods and over-the-counter products, like vitamins, pain relievers and toothbrushes.

Prioritize your health this year by taking time to understand and use the benefits in your healthcare plan. Visit Medicare.gov to learn more.



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